

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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E.O.: 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB PFOR DA

SUBJ: DANISH PETROLEUM DRIVERS STRIKE A THREAT TO DANISH  
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STABILITY

REF: COPENHAGEN 4202 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: RESISTING PRESSURE FROM ALL SEGMENTS OF DANISH  
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL LIFE EXCEPT THE EXTREME RIGHT AND LEFT,  
DANISH PETROLEUM PRODUCT TRUCK DRIVERS VOTED, IN DRAMATIC  
MEETING TODAY (NOVEMBER 24) TO CONTINUE THEIR FOUR DAY-OLD  
STRIKE. THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING THE ADOPTION OF AN  
EMERGENCY LAW FREEZING WAGES AND PRICES AS A WAY OF RESOLVING  
THE IMPASSE. DEPENDING ON WHAT HAPPENS IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS  
THIS STRIKE COULD HAVE SERIOUS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES FOR DENMARK. END SUMMARY.

1. IGNORING PRESSURE FROM THE GOVERNMENT, THE DANISH  
TRADE UNION FEDERATION (LO) (TO WHICH THEY ARE NOT  
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AFFILIATED), AND FROM THE EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION, DANISH

PETROLEUM TRUCK DRIVERS (ABOUT 1200 NATIONWIDE) VOTED TODAY (NOVEMBER 24) OVERWHELMINGLY TO CONTINUE THEIR FOUR-DAY-OLD STRIKE. THE CONSEQUENCES OF FUEL SHORTAGE CAUSED BY A FAILURE OF THE DRIVERS TO MAKE DELIVERIES ARE WIDESPREAD AND AFFECT ALMOST EVERY AREA OF DANISH LIFE. HEATING OIL IN SOME CENTRAL REMOTE HEATING PLANTS HAS BEEN USED UP AND THE COLD EARLY WINTER WEATHER IS CAUSING GROWING DISCOMFORT. SOME PLANTS HAVE SENT WORKERS HOME. GASOLINE STATIONS, EXCEPT A FEW SUPPLIED BY INDEPENDENT OPERATORS DRAWING SUPPLIES FROM WEST GERMANY, ARE CLOSED AND TRAFFIC IN THE CITY HAS NOTICEABLY DECREASED AS MORE AND MORE PEOPLE TURN TO AVAILABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO GO TO WORK AND EXECUTE OTHER ERRANDS.

2. THE LO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AT A MEETING THIS MORNING BEFORE THE DRIVERS DECIDED TO CONTINUE THEIR STRIKE, APPEALED TO THEIR SENSE OF SOLIDARITY WITH OTHER ELEMENTS OF DANISH SOCIETY IN AN EFFORT TO INFLUENCE THE DRIVERS' DECISION. PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN, SPEAKING YESTERDAY AT THE OPENING OF THE INDEPENDENT CIVIL SERVANTS AND SALARIED EMPLOYEES FEDERATION'S (FTF) CONGRESS ALSO APPEALED TO THE CHAUFFEURS TO RETURN TO WORK AND SAID THAT THEIR FAILURE TO DO SO COULD HAVE UNFORESEEABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE DANISH ECONOMY. THE DANISH EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION OPPOSES THE STRIKE AND POINTS OUT THAT THE STRIKING DRIVERS ARE NOT, AS THE NEWSPAPERS HAVE REPORTED, AMONG THE LOWEST-PAID WORKERS IN THE COUNTRY.

3. YESTERDAY EVENING, THE DANISH LABOR COURT JUDGED THE STRIKE OF THE DRIVERS ILLEGAL AND ORDERED THEM TO RETURN TO WORK WITHIN 48 HOURS. IT WAS IN ORDER TO ACT WITHIN THIS TIME LIMIT THAT THE STRIKERS MOVED THEIR MEETING FROM ITS SCHEDULED TIME TOMORROW TO TODAY. AT THIS MOMENT, POLITICAL PARTY REPRESENTATIVES ARE MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER TO CONSIDER THE ADOPTION OF A LAW DECREETING A WAGE AND PRICE FREEZE WHICH WILL CONTAIN PROVISIONS WHICH WOULD PROVIDE FOR SEVERE PUNISHMENT OF EMPLOYERS WHO GRANT WAGE INCREASES. ACCORDING TO SOME REPORTS, THE LAW MAY BE MADE RETROACTIVE TO THE 15TH OF NOVEMBER THUS INCLUDING THE DRIVERS FOR THE DANISH FALCK (DANISH AM-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BULANCE AND RESCUE SERVICE) WHOSE DEMAND FOR AND RECEIPT OF A SIZEABLE HOURLY WAGE INCREASE LAST WEEK TRIGGERED THE STRIKE ACTION OF THE PETROLEUM PRODUCT TRUCK DRIVERS.

4. BOTH THE LO AND THE DANISH EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION OPPOSE THE ADOPTION OF A WAGE AND PRICE LAW, AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES OF BOTH ORGANIZATIONS ARE MEETING NOW TO CONSIDER THEIR POSITIONS IN LIGHT OF THE DRIVERS' DECISION TO MAINTAIN THEIR STRIKE

ACTION. A RELIABLE LO SOURCE HAS TOLD US THAT THE LO LEADERS WOULD CALL UPON THE GOVERNING SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TO HOLD NATIONAL ELECTIONS IF SUCH A LAW WERE ADOPTED. THE PROPOSAL FOR A WAGE AND PRICE FREEZE AS THE SOLUTION TO THE CRITICAL PROBLEM POSED BY THE STRIKING DRIVERS CAME FROM THE LIBERAL PARTY AND IS SEEN BY THE LO AS A CONTINUATION OF THE LIBERAL POLICY OF CUTTING BACK ON TRADE UNION POWER AND INFLUENCE IN DENMARK.

5. COMMENT: WITH PUBLIC OPINION EXCITED AND CRITICAL ACTIVITIES IN DENMARK JEOPARDIZED BY THE STOP IN FUEL DELIVERIES, ANKER JORGENSEN'S MINORITY SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IS FACED WITH PROBABLY THE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEM WITH WHICH IT HAS HAD TO DEAL SINCE ITS INSTALLATION IN CHRISTIANSBORG. EVEN THOUGH THERE IS NO PRESENT THOUGHT IN DENMARK OF SOLVING THIS PROBLEM BY THE USE OF MILITARY OR POLICE UNITS, THE STRIKING DRIVERS ARE IN AN UGLY MOOD; EVEN AFTER THE ADOPTION OF EMERGENCY LEGISLATION SUCH AS THAT DESCRIBED ABOVE, THEY MAY CONTINUE TO REFUSE TO WORK. THE SITUATION CONTAINS MANY POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE POSSIBILITIES AND THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE AN EASY ANSWER. IT FEARS THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF A SUCCESSFUL STRIKE AND, IF THE DRIVERS DO NOT RETURN TO WORK SOON, THE UNAPPETIZING PROSPECT OF USING HIGHLY-CONTROVERSIAL MEANS TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT.

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